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NEWS BRIEFS

AL grand rally in city Dec 1

By Staff Correspondent
The ruling Awami League will hold a grand rally at 2 pm at Manik Mia Avenue in the city on December 1 in celebration of the silver jubilee of National Victory Day. Says a press release.

Prime Minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina will address the rally.

BCL activist shot dead in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Nov 22: One Chhatra League activist was shot dead allegedly by his rivals last night at Gonibakery crossing here, police said.

Rubel Sen, 25, came under armed attack while he was on way to Chawkbazar, police said. He was admitted to Chittagong Medical Hospital with bullet wounds where he died at 9 pm, hospital and police source said.

Rubel was a student of Islamia College at Sadarghat Road in the city.

2 rocket launchers recovered in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Nov 22: Two rocket launchers and six hand bombs were recovered this afternoon by Chandga thana police from Munshibari of Khawka Road. Police said. The rocket launchers were recovered from a locked-up toilet.

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report.

One falls from rooftop, dies

Manik Mia, 60, a construction worker died when he fell from the rooftop of a house at Dhanmondi yesterday morning. The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, reports BSS.

Phensidyl recovered

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Nov 22: Police arrested a young man Mostapha Khaled, 24, and recovered 119 bottles of phensidyl. He was carrying them from Bagerhat, police said.

11 killed in Allahabad fire

LUCKNOW, Nov 22: At least 11 people were killed in a devastating fire in a house in Jamiana village in Allahabad district early today, according to reports received at the police headquarters here. Fire tenders had been rushed to the spot and rescue work was in progress, the reports said, according to PTI.

1 killed in road accident

COMILLA, Nov 22: A pedestrian was killed and two others were injured when a speeding bus hit another one on Comilla-Chandpur road near Srimantapur in Sadar thana today, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Saiful Alam, 15, son of Rustom Ali of Srimantapur village.

Remote trading system to be introduced DSE move to end kerb market activities in six months

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka Stock Exchange will introduce Broadcasting and Remote Trading system and computerised trading mechanism within six months to ensure that the kerb market outside the DSE floor ceases to exist.

This was disclosed by DSE Chairman Imtiyaz Husain at a press conference at Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday.

A team from the bourse will visit Madras soon to see the system in which investors place sale or buy orders from distance places, he said.

Imtiyaz said if the system is found suitable, it will be installed in the DSE. "We hope it would be functional within six months."

He also said that the existing trading floor of the DSE would

be computerised to ensure transparency and accountability in share trading.

Besides, spaces have been rented near the DSE building where four new booths would be set up to ease the pressure on the two existing booths. Transaction increased by three times in recent months, he pointed out.

The DSE Council, the highest decision-making body, has also decided to set up an independent organisation with representatives from banks, financial institutions and stock exchanges to manage a central depository system, Imtiyaz said.

"This organisation will be the custodian of all shares and debentures," the DSE chairman said, adding that they had already approached the govern-

ment to arrange necessary legal framework for the purpose.

He, however, said establishment of a central depository system would take about two years time.

The DSE chairman denied an allegation made by kerb market operators that a section of DSE members had been involved in manipulating share trading on the floor.

The other councillor of the DSE including former chairman Khurshid Alam, Khaja Abdul Qudus, vice-chairman Ahmed Iqbal Hasan, honorary secretary Shahiq Khan, former honorary secretary Abdul Haq Hawajder, Azam Chowdhury, Rakibur Rahman and Rafiqul Alam were present.

Imtiyaz said that the main problem in the capital market

was less supply of shares compared to their demand, which can be resolved by releasing government shares in different organisations and those of multi-national companies.

He said that though the demand for shares increased greatly during the period, the supply of scripts did not increase by even 5 per cent.

When asked about the allegation of manipulation of the market by some DSE members and foreign investors, Imtiyaz said that he never noticed any manipulation by the DSE members. If foreigners were involved in it, the Bangladesh Bank must know the matter because they all have corporate identity, he added.

Responding to a question re-

130 Singaporean investors show interest in potential sectors

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed has invited Singaporean investors to relocate their investment in Bangladesh as "it offers the best investment opportunity available in the world", report agencies.

The seminar was attended by 130 Singaporean investors from wide range of sectors including energy, telecommunications, infrastructure, textile, software, computers and electronics, who are interested to invest in Bangladesh.

Important business personalities from Bangladesh included Samson H Chowdhury, Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP, Dr Mohammad Iqbal MP, Az-

Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Executive Chairman of Board of Investment (BOI) Dr Taufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, said a message received here.

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25 supporters of BNP shot in Natore

NATORE, Nov 22: Twenty-five supporters of the opposition BNP were injured with bullet when rivals opened fire on them at a bazaar in Barigram thana today, witnesses said, reports UNB.

They said the BNP men came under attack when they were waiting for a reconciliation meeting with the ruling Awami League scheduled to be held at Panchabaria Bazar at 9 am. The meeting was planned to settle disputes between supporters of the two parties that had led to a clash on Thursday.

Supporters of the Awami League allegedly fired at least 50 rounds of gunshot forcing BNP activists to leave the place.

Six people all belonging to the BNP, received injuries and were sent to the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. They are: Abu Baker, 30, Abed Ali, 28, Afzazzal, 26, Manik, 25, Mozamme, 32, and Ramzan Ali, 35.

Witnesses said the attackers ransacked houses of some local BNP leaders and assaulted in-

Sporadic clashes at Sirajganj: 40 injured

From Our Correspondent
SIRAJGANJ, Nov 22: Sporadic clashes between the activists of Awami League and BNP in the town today left at least 40 injured.

Eyewitnesses said the clashes erupted when some BNP activists threw stones at AL office at about 6 pm. Police lobbed tear gas shells to disperse the BNP supporters.

BNP activists also damaged a car near Borobazar crossing. Local people said that today's clashes were sequel to last night's incident in which JCD leader Nazimul Hasan Rana sustained stab injury.

The injured were admitted to private clinics. Police were deployed at important places of the town.

Dhaka urges Delhi to effect 50pc tariff cut on exportables

NEW DELHI, Nov 22: Bangladesh High Commissioner to India CM Shafi Sami has urged the Indian government to effect 50 per cent tariff reduction on a range of 14 categories of Bangladeshi exports within the declared time frame and remove all quantitative restrictions, reports BSS.

The privileged access of Bangladesh exportables to India would have no adverse impact on the local industry, he said.

Addressing the Indo-Bangladesh Joint Business Council (JBC) meeting here recently, Sami said Indian industry and business would gain

Rao supporters removed from top party positions

NEW DELHI, Nov 22: In a move to sideline former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, the new Congress Party chief today removed Rao's supporters from key party positions, reports AP.

Sita Ram Kesari, who became party president after Rao was indicted on criminal charges in September, also readmitted three former Cabinet ministers who had been expelled from the party for leading a revolt against Rao two years ago. They are K Natwar Singh, Shiv Charan Mathur and V Ramamurthy.

In a move to assert his own authority, Kesari sacked BN

DU student commits suicide

By DU Correspondent
A student of the Dhaka University, committed suicide yesterday at his residence on DU campus, according to Ramna Police.

Abu Raihan, son of a university teacher, committed suicide by hanging himself from a ceiling fan at about 2:30 pm, police said. His family members rushed him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Tea output up by 6m KGs

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Nov 22: Tea output went up by 6 million kgs in the first ten months of this year compared to the corresponding period of last year, official reports said.

During the ten months since January this year, 44.7 million kgs of tea were produced which is up from 38.8 million kgs produced in the corresponding period of 1995.

The country targeted to produce 54 million kgs of tea this year, officials said.

Probe into BB irregularities An influential group made gains by relaxing rule

By Staff Correspondent

A Finance Ministry probe has detected "irregularities and conspiracies" in the Bangladesh Bank (BB), and suggested "immediate steps" to stop repetition of such things.

The probe report said that an "influential group has made gains by relaxing Article 25 (3) of the Financial Institutions Act (FIA) by means of the central bank's 'hostage'."

"In this context, those who had been involved in the conspiracy should be given exemplary punishment," said the report submitted into Finance Minister SAMS Kibria by the finance secretary on October 30.

Following removal of deputy governor of the BB, M R Khan, in October for allegedly exercising unauthorised power in issuing licenses to eight financial institutions, Finance Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan was assigned on October 19 to investigate irregularities in issuance of licenses and letters of intent under the FIA, 1993, to different financial institutions.

The finance secretary also suggested in his report that

Anti-Corruption Department and Detective Branch should be directed to begin an investigation against the officials of BB and Banking Department who were involved in issuance of the central bank notification on relaxing Article 25 (3) of the FIA.

The report termed Bangladesh Bank Governor Khurshid Alam's "silence" regarding the irregularities "mysterious" and said that the governor did not assert his role nor take any action against the irregularities which "he was well aware of."

Khurshid Alam was replaced by Lutful Rahman Sarkar as Governor of the central bank Thursday.

According to the report, 14 FIs were given licenses so far. Of these, five FIs were functioning before the promulgation of FIA, 1993, and nine FIs were given licenses afterwards. Of these nine FIs, licenses of five FIs were issued without the approval of the Governor.

These five FIs were: International Leasing and Financial Services Ltd, Prime Finance and Investment Ltd, See Page 12 Col 1

Queen Sophia in city

Queen Sophia of Spain flew in Dhaka yesterday on a six-day private visit to Bangladesh, mainly to visit some projects of Grameen Bank and their activities, reports UNB.

"I'm very interested in Grameen Bank and I came here at the invitation of Prof Yunus to see his projects," the Spanish Queen told newsmen at airport on her arrival from London in the afternoon.

Replying to a question, she said Grameen Bank is now quite known in Spain and indeed all over the world.

Apart from Grameen Bank, Queen Sophia, who came here in her capacity as the President of Queen Sophia Foundation, said she has a lot of interests in other areas of socio-cultural life in Bangladesh.

Asked to comment on her first ever visit to Bangladesh, the 58-year-old Queen said, "I'm looking forward."

The smiling Queen, wearing a navy blue summer suit and her sister Princess Irene were received by Chief of Protocol A K M Farooq and Grameen Bank managing director Prof Mohammad Yunus. A tiny tot presented the Queen a bouquet.

The Queen will call on President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Tuesday.

Prime Minister Hasina and Queen Sophia will co-chair the Micro-Credit Summit to be held in Washington next February. They are expected to exchange

See Page 12 Col 8



Queen Sophia being presented a bouquet upon her arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday. — Star photo

Supreme Court sets aside all restrictions Bangalore tense as Miss World contest goes ahead tonight

NEW DELHI, Nov 22: India's Supreme Court today struck down a string of restrictions imposed on the organisers of the protest-plagued Miss World 1996 beauty contest, reports AFP.

The apex court threw out the rulings of the Karnataka High Court, which on November 19 had imposed several pre-conditions on the pageant.

The judgement came a day before the event's grand finale tomorrow in a southern Indian city of Bangalore.

Hindu militants have called for a general shutdown in Bangalore tomorrow while 15 radical feminists have threatened to burn themselves to death in protest against Miss World, being held for the first time in India.

Miss World organisers, Amitabh Bachchan Corporation Ltd (ABCL), challenging the Karnataka court's orders

had said its restrictions were 'onerous' and would be against free and fair competition.

The conditions besides being onerous, will work grave hardships especially when participants from India have been taking part for three decades without threat or hindrance in any part of the world, the ABCL said.

The Karnataka court, reacting to appeals from anti-pageant feminists, had said the contestants could face prosecution in case of indecent exposure amounting to 'obscenity or nudity'.

The provincial court also restricted ABCL from serving liquor to spectators and banned the deployment of the army or federal guards for the beauty contest.

It also ordered a 'minimum use of force' by the Bangalore police to quell anti-pageant rallies and protests at the venue

of the 19-day extravaganza.

Supreme Court Chief Justice A M Ahmadi said the Karnataka court's string of restrictions, except on liquor, were not sustainable.

Ahmadi said the ABCL appeal that liquor would be served only as a welcome toast at the beginning of the pageant and as a toast at the end of the contest was acceptable.

Eighty-eight participants are in the fray for the Miss World crown. The coronation and a following grand ball is scheduled for Sunday.

Meanwhile, billboards and banners welcoming contestants are the only signs of favour in Karnataka where more than 10,000 troops have mounted guard to pre-empt violence in and around the 20,000-seat Chinnaswamy Stadium — the Venue of the finale.

ABCL said the pageant

See Page 12 Col 3

Finance Ministry okays formation of 6 election tribunals

Star Report
The proposal for formation of six election tribunals in six divisional headquarters had been approved by the finance ministry, according to official sources.

Six new posts have already been created and judges of the rank of district and sessions judge are likely to join these courts sometime in January.

An initial allocation of Tk 40 lakh has been earmarked for functioning of the tribunals for a period of one year.

Trial of cases would be held in the district of the petitioner and the judge would remain present there to hear the cases, the sources said. The Election Commission as well as the Law Ministry have suggested this to reduce expenses of the petitioners, they said.

At present 61 election tribunals are functioning in 64 districts and the district and sessions judges, in addition to their duties, are discharging the responsibilities of the election tribunals. These 61 tribunals

See Page 12 Col 4

'No more stock exchange but a national one'

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Nov 22: Finance Minister SAMS Kibria has said the government is not considering setting up of any stock exchange in Sylhet, Khulna, Rajshahi or Barisal.

But he added, formation of a national stock exchange is being considered to protect the interests of investors.

He was speaking as chief guest at a meeting of investors of Sylhet Division and certificate awarding ceremony of a two-day workshop on 'Share Market' organised by the Investors Forum, Sylhet, here this afternoon.

Kibria said "Our economy has been in the grip of a vicious circle for decades due to different reasons. It should not continue," the government is firm to put the economy on a sound footing, he added.

The minister said the government would ensure all necessary help for establishing an export processing zone (EPZ) in Sylhet region, if private initiatives are taken. Sylhet, despite

being a potential area for setting up of industries, remained uncared during the last decades, he said. A large number of non-resident Bangladeshis from this region had shown their keen interest in investing in the country. "We should give proper attention to them in our national interest," he added.

Kibria said the present government is keen to increase private sector investment. Due to different reasons, investment in the public sector had failed to give any positive result.

MS Shekil Chowdhury, Chairman of Investors Forum, Sylhet, presided and Justice Badrul Islam Chowdhury was a special guest at the function. It was also addressed by Hafiz Ahmed Majumder MP and Prof Abu Ahmed of Dhaka University.

The finance minister also attended some programmes organised by Rotary Club of Sylhet Midtown and District Sports Association tonight.

New edn policy won't be politically biased: Sadek

By DU Correspondent

Education Minister ASHK Sadek yesterday said that an education policy suiting the needs of the time would be framed in the light of the Kuddat-e-Khuda Commission report.

The education policy should be framed on the basis of a national consensus taking the opinions of experts, keeping an eye on the future needs, he said while inaugurating a workshop on education held at the TSC of Dhaka University. A committee will be formed to frame the education policy, he added.

Bangladesh College University Teachers' Association organised the workshop. The inaugural ceremony was also addressed by Prof AK Azad Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor DU, Prof Aminul Islam, VC, Open University, Prof Aminul Islam, VC, National University,

Prof Abdul Mannan and VC, Chittagong University, President of the Association Prof M Akteruzzaman presided.

The minister said the proposed education policy will not reflect the policy of any political party. The reports of different commissions in the past were not acceptable to all as those were 'politically motivated,' he said.

"Finance is the main problem in implementing an education policy," the minister said adding, "We generally depend on the foreign grants and loans for which, sometimes, donors' policy prevail over our own policy."

"If we don't accept grants and loans, we will have to impose new tax."

The education minister sought suggestions from experts and said recommendation of the workshop will be considered. See Page 12 Col 1

Complaints with the lone investigation cell Husbands mostly shirk duties to wives

By Masud Arif and Morshed Ali Khan

Most of the complaints filed with the country's lone investigation cell concerning repression on woman and children indicated that husbands shirked responsibility to wives and their children.

Besides, kidnapping of school or college girls, torture on wives by husbands, sexual harassment of teenage female garment workers are some other common complaints lodged with the investigation cell at Mirpur thana, officials there said.

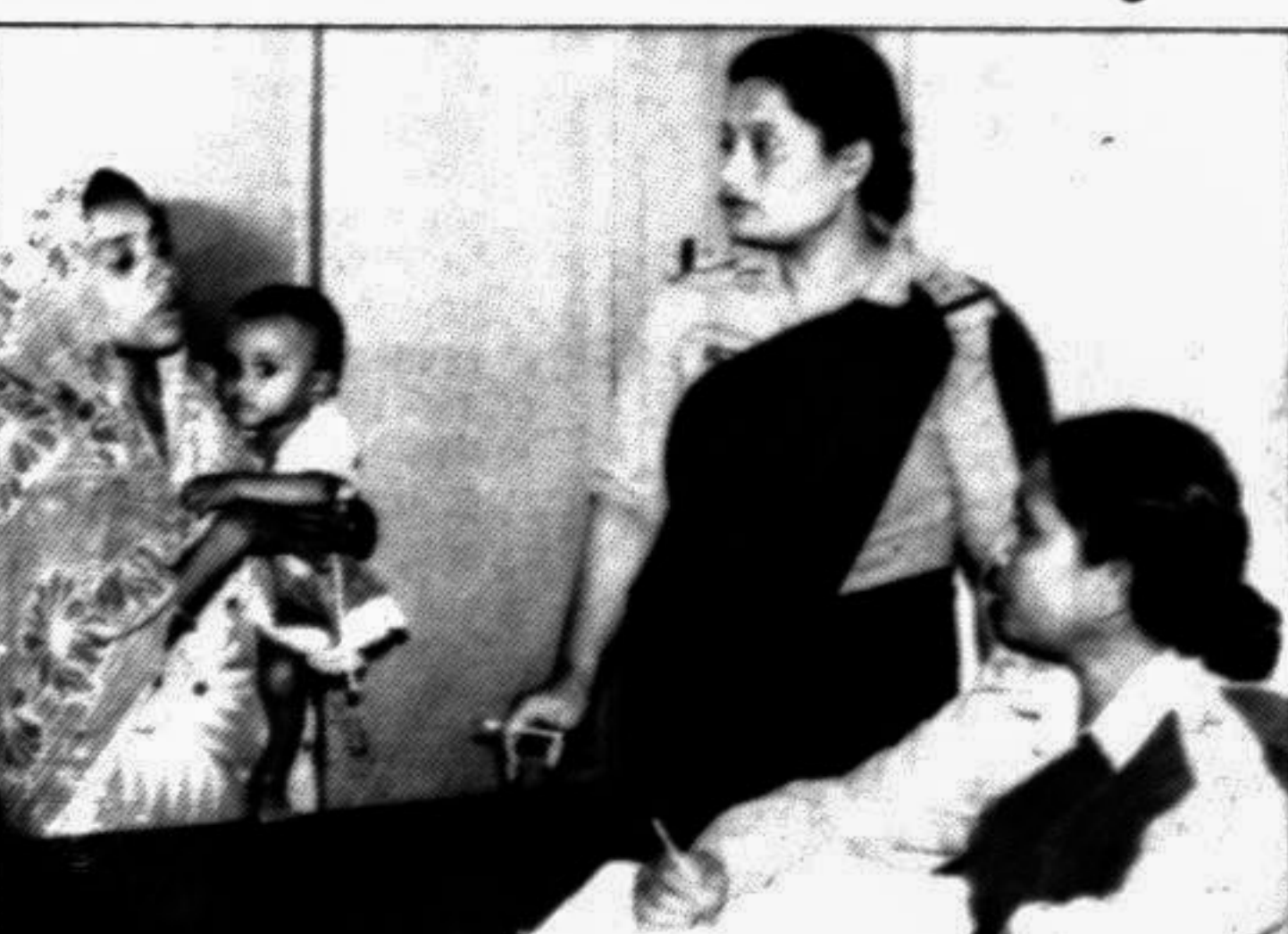
Manned only by woman police, the specialised cell was set up on August 16 this year to hear exclusively incidents concerning women and children. It has so far filed 29 cases under the Women and Children Repression Act of 1995. With four woman sub-inspectors, the cell has a total of 14 personnel.

It is open for day and night and operates only within the jurisdiction of Mirpur thana.

"Everyday we have some women coming to us with various problems. Most of them complained that their husbands did not extend any financial support to them and remarried elsewhere," said a woman police officer at the cell. She added that the cell did not get any complaint as regards oppression on children.

About harassment of female garment workers, the official said that in most cases, the workers rented accommodations in poor areas and lived together. They were often victimised by unscrupulous landlords or by mastaans of the areas.

Officials at the cell expressed concern over the way most of



"He pulled a bunch of hair off my skull": Taslima complaining to officials at the lone investigation cell at Mirpur thana in the city yesterday. — Star photo